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REMARKS

The present response is intended to be fully responsive to all points of objection and/or rejection raised by the Office Action and is believed to place the application in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the application is respectfully requested.

Applicants assert that the present invention is new, non-obvious and useful. Prompt consideration and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Status of Claims

Claims 1-34 are pending in the application. Claims 1-18 have been objected to. Claims 1-34 have been rejected. Claims 1-5, 8, 12-14, 16, 19, 27 and 30 have been amended.

Claims 17 and 18 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. In making this cancellation without prejudice, Applicants reserve all rights in these claims to file divisional and/or continuation patent applications.

Applicants respectfully assert that the amendments to the claims, drawings and the abstract add no new matter.

Remarks to the Abstract

The Office Action objected the Abstract because it lacks proper language. Applicants respectfully assert that the objection to Abstract has been overcome by the Applicants amendments. Applicants respectfully request that the objections to the Abstract be withdrawn.

Remarks to the Specification

The amendments to the specification are editorial in nature and do not introduce new matter.

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Drawings Rejections

The drawings have been objected to because of improper character size used in Figs. 1-4. Figures 1-4 have been amended.

Claim Objections

In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to claims 1-18 because of alleged informalities. Claims 1-18 have been amended in order to cure these informalities. Accordingly, Applicants request withdrawal of the objection.

CLAIM REJECTIONS

35 U.S.C. § 112 Rejections

The Office Action rejected claims 14, 15 and 27-29 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 14, 15 and 27-29 have been amended. Applicants respectfully assert that these amendments render claims 14, 15 and 27-29 proper under 35 USC §112 and request that the rejections be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejections

The Office Action, rejected claims 17, 18, 19, 24-30 and 32-34 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Viterbi et al. (US 5,933,462).

Applicants believe this rejection has been overcome in view of the amendments made above and the remarks that follow.

Claims 17 and 18 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. In making this cancellation without prejudice, Applicants reserve all rights in these claims to file divisional and/or continuation patent applications.

Regarding amended independent claims 19 and 30, the independent claims include limitations that are not disclosed or suggested by Viterbi et al.

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It is well established that obviousness requires a teaching or a suggestion by the prior art of all the elements of a claim (M.P.E.P. §2142). Without conceding the appropriateness of the rejection, Applicants respectfully submit that Viterbi et al. does not meet the requirements of an obvious rejection in that Viterbi et al. does not disclose or suggest the element of "...the backward decoding of the first sub-block is able to start within iterative calculations of a portion of the second sub-block" as claimed in amended claims 19 and 30.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 19 and 30 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Applicants note that claims 24-29 depend from claim 19 and claims 32-34 depend from claim 23. Thus, in addition to any independent bases for patentability, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 24-29 and 32-34 are similarly patentable over the cited reference by virtue of at least such dependency. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of such claims be withdrawn.

The Office Action, rejected claims 1-16, 20-23 and 31 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Viterbi et al. (US 5,933,462) in view of Lee et al. (US 6,289,486).

Applicants believe this rejection has been overcome in view of the amendments made above and the remarks that follow.

Regarding amended independent claims 1 and 8, the independent claims includes limitations that are not disclosed or suggested by the combination of Viterbi et al. and Lee et al.

It is well established that obviousness requires a teaching or a suggestion by the prior art of all the elements of a claim (M.P.E.P. §2142). Without conceding the appropriateness of the combination, Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Lee and Viterbi et al. does not meet the requirements of an obvious rejection in that neither of the references disclose or suggest the element of "...starting to perform a backward iterative calculation on a first sub-block within some point of a second portion of the second sub-block" as claimed in amended claims 1 and 23.

Since Lee et al. and Viterbi et al., taken separately, are devoid of any disclosing or suggestion of the limitations recited in claims 1 and/or 8, the combination of Lee et al. and

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Viterbi et al. must necessarily be devoid of the required teaching or suggestion of all the elements recited in claims 1 and/or 8. Consequently, the combination cannot make Applicants claims 1 and 8 obvious.

Applicants note that claims 2-7 depend from claim 1, claims 9-16, depend from claim 8, claims 20-23 dependent from amended claim 19 and claim 31 dependent from amended claim 30. Thus, in addition to any independent bases for patentability, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2-16, 20-23 and 31 are similarly patentable over the cited references by virtue of at least such dependency. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of such claims be withdrawn.

In addition, Applicants note that Lee et al. is not cited as curing the deficiencies of Viterbi et al. and does not, in fact, cure such limitations. In this regard, without conceding the appropriateness of the combination, or the characterization of such references vis a vis claims 1-16, 20-23 and 31, Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Viterbi et al. in view of Lee et al. references fail to disclose or suggest that which is claimed in amended independent claims 1 and 8 and dependent claims 2-16, 20-23 and 31. Accordingly, in addition to any independent bases for patentability, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-16, 20-23 and 31 are similarly patentable over the cited references by virtue of at least such dependency.

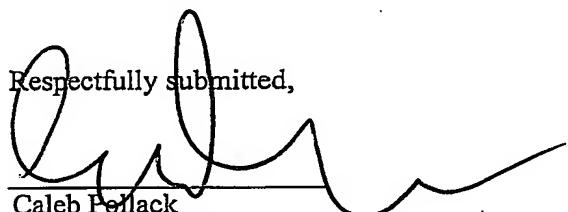
Accordingly, Applicants respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 1-16, 20-23 and 31 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the pending claims are deemed to be allowable. Their favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested.

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Should the Examiner have any question or comment as to the form, content or entry of this Amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number below. Similarly, if there are any further issues yet to be resolved to advance the prosecution of this application to issue, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned counsel.

Please charge any fees associated with this paper to deposit account No. 05-0649.

Respectfully submitted,

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